

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A 3

WASHINGTON POST
4 November 1984

Lindbergh Aided U.S.

Flier Gathered Details About Nazi Luftwaffe, Papers Say

United Press International

SAN FRANCISCO—Charles A. Lindbergh, often branded as a Nazi sympathizer during World War II, gathered intelligence for the United States on four visits to Germany before the war, according to papers of the pre-war U.S. military attache in Berlin.

The late Col. Truman Smith, who was America's military representative in Berlin between 1935 and 1939, said in papers recently published by the Hoover Institution that Lindbergh provided crucial details about the Luftwaffe's planes and Hitler's aircraft-manufacturing facilities.

As for the highly publicized incident in which Nazi Field Marshal Hermann Goering presented Lindbergh with a medal in 1938, the papers say neither Smith nor Lindbergh had advance knowledge of Goering's plan.

Robert Hessen, who edited the Smith papers, said that even if they had been alerted, Lindbergh would not have been able to refuse the medal without offending Goering at a time when Lindbergh and Smith needed his favor "if they wanted to see more of the German Air Force."

Another reason Lindbergh did not want to annoy Goering, Smith's papers said, was that he hoped to persuade Goering "that German Jews who were emigrating should not be forced to leave penniless."

Lindbergh became a hero in 1927 when he made the first nonstop solo flight from New York to Paris, in the "Spirit of St. Louis." He was again in the news when his young son was kidnapped and killed in 1932.

Many American politicians and commentators, such as columnist Walter Winchell, accused Lindbergh of exaggerating Germany's military power to frighten the Allies into believing that the Luftwaffe was invincible.

Apparently because of his deep distaste for publicity, Lindbergh never tried publicly to clear himself of the charges of having been pro-Nazi during the war.

Smith, who had also been labeled pro-Nazi, likewise "wanted to put the whole thing out of his mind," according to his widow, Katharine A.H. Smith, who lives in Fairfield, Conn.

She said in an interview with Hessen that she persuaded her husband in the mid-1950s to write a report on the Lindbergh matter because it "would be the only way to set the record straight for future historians."

Smith wrote that before World War II, U.S. military intelligence had no undercover agents in Germany and relied solely on the Berlin attache and his two aides to keep tabs on the rapidly growing German forces.

Because Smith was busy assessing Germany's growing army and its Panzer divisions, he decided to recruit Lindbergh to make an assessment of the Luftwaffe.

Smith correctly judged that Goering would be delighted to show the world's most renowned flier his new aircraft.

Lindbergh made four visits to Germany. At the end of at least two of them he helped Smith write detailed reports for military intelligence in Washington. Lindbergh was allowed to inspect in detail such new and experimental German warplanes as the Junkers 52 bomber and the Messerschmidt 109 fighter plane, and even allowed to fly some of them, Smith writes.

Smith said Lindbergh also made it possible for the American air attache in Berlin, a trained intelligence officer, to visit numerous bases and factories that were otherwise off limits.

Besides collecting a great deal of new information in the field, Smith wrote, Lindbergh's prestige in America gave more credibility to his warnings of Hitler's growing power, even though these warnings won him the contempt of people who refused to believe that Germany could challenge her European neighbors.